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LETTER DATED 19 FEBRUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to request you to have circulated as a document of the Security Council of the United Nations the following information about the Soviet-Iraqi talks held in Moscow on 18 February 1991.

"During the talks with the personal representative of the President of Iraq, the Soviet side proceeded from the assumption that the current spiralling crisis in the Persian Gulf called for immediate and resolute measures to avoid further escalation of the conflict, to save thousands of lives, and to prevent the threat of disruption of the ecological balance of the whole region.

In the course of a prolonged and substantive exchange of views on the situation in the military-operations theatre and on the whole range of issues that brought about those operations, President Gorbachev proposed a plan of specific measures.

This plan is predicated on the necessity of strictly abiding by the mandate set forth in the resolutions of the Security Council regarding the Gulf crisis. The key element of the plan consists in securing a rapid start of a withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait, which would make it possible to put an immediate end to the bloodshed.

We hope that our proposals will be considered in a most serious manner. We are now awaiting a reaction from Baghdad, which we expect very soon. On the basis of that reaction, a substantive discussion of practical measures would be possible.

The current situation calls for a cautious, responsible approach. This is no time for loud and spectacular initiatives, but for a serious diplomatic process. The effectiveness of such a process will determine the prospects for a rapid movement towards political settlement on the basis of the decisions of the Security Council, with due regard for the important role of that body in maintaining international peace and security."

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV